

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend the claims to read as indicated below.

1. (currently amended) A method for notification of return of equipment having at least one function to a home station, comprising the steps of:

providing said equipment with an integral reminder alarm and reminder alarm timeout for return of the equipment to the home station, said reminder alarm timeout having a default timeout configuration;

optionally configuring the reminder alarm timeout configuration at the home station;

arming the reminder alarm timeout; and

when the timeout expires, generating the reminder alarm from the equipment to return the equipment to the home station.

2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of upon return of the equipment to the home station, resetting the reminder alarm timeout configuration to said default configuration.

3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the generating step further comprises the step of when the equipment is not essential, disabling the at least one function of the equipment.

4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein:
the providing step further comprises providing a default reminder alarm progression;
the configuring step further comprises optionally configuring the progression for said reminder alarm; and

the generating step further comprises generating a sequence of progressive reminder alarms according to said configured progression.

5. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein said configuring step further comprises setting the progression to one of an incremental increase and random variation in at least one of the intensity of the reminder alarm and frequency of the reminder alarm.

6. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said generating step further comprises generating the reminder alarm as at least one repetition of at least one of an audio tone, an audio message, a visual signal, and a video text message.

7. (original) The method of claim 6, wherein:
the providing step further comprises providing a default reminder alarm progression;
the configuring step further comprises optionally configuring the progression for said reminder alarm; and
and the generating step further comprises generating said at least one repetition as a sequence of progressive reminder alarms according to said configured progression.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
providing said home station as a touchpad input device that accepts a password input via the touchpad;
inputting a password via said touchpad; and
resetting said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on input of a predetermined password.

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

providing said home station as a mechanical key reset device that resets the reminder alarm when mechanically engaged with said reminder alarm; and

including a key controller in said provided reminder alarm that resets said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on mechanical engagement with the mechanical key reset device.

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

providing said home station as one of an infrared transmitter and a radio frequency transmitter, having a given range that continually transmits a reminder alarm reset signal; and

including a corresponding one of an infrared sensor and a radio frequency receiver in said provided reminder alarm that resets said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on receipt of said transmitted reset signal,

wherein said reminder alarm is continually reset whenever said equipment is within the given range of the home station.

11. (currently amended) An apparatus for notification that equipment having at least one function is due for return to a home station, comprising:

a reminder alarm integral to the equipment for notification that the equipment is due for return to the home station, said reminder alarm having a default timeout configuration;

a timeout device; and

a control device to

optionally configure the reminder alarm timeout configuration at the home station, and

arm the timeout device with the configured timeout, and

when the timeout expires, generate a reminder alarm to return the equipment to the home station, said alarm generating according to the timeout configuration.

12. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said control device is further configured to upon return of the equipment to the home station, reset the reminder alarm timeout configuration to said default timeout configuration.

13. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said control device is further configured to when the equipment is not essential, disable the at least one function of the equipment.

14. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein:

the reminder alarm timeout configuration further comprises a default reminder alarm progression;
the control device is further configured to:
 optionally configure the progression for said reminder alarm, and
 generating a sequence of progressive reminder alarms according to said configured progression.

15. (original) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein said control devices is further configured to set the progression to one of an incremental increase and random variation in at least one of the intensity of the reminder alarm and frequency of the reminder alarm.

16. (currently amended) The ~~method-apparatus~~ of claim 11, wherein said control devices is further configured to generate the reminder alarm as at least one repetition of at

least one of an audio tone, an audio message, a visual signal, and a video text message.

17. (currently amended) The ~~method~~-apparatus of claim 16, wherein the control device is further configured to:
provide a default reminder alarm progression;
optionally configure the progression for said reminder alarm; and

generate the at least one repetition as a sequence of progressive reminder alarms according to said configured progression.

18. (currently amended) The ~~method~~-apparatus of claim 11, wherein:

said home station is a touchpad input device that accepts a password input via the touchpad; and

said control device is further configured to reset said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on input of a predetermined password via the touchpad.

19. (currently amended) The ~~method~~-apparatus of claim 11, wherein:

said home station is a mechanical key reset device that resets the reminder alarm when mechanically engaged with said reminder alarm; and

said reminder alarm further comprises a key controller that resets said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on mechanical engagement with the mechanical key reset device.

20. (currently amended) The ~~method~~-apparatus of claim 11, wherein:

said home station is one of an infrared transmitter and a radio frequency transmitter, having a given range and that continually transmits a reminder alarm reset signal; and

said reminder alarm further comprises a corresponding one of an infrared sensor and a radio frequency receiver that resets said reminder alarm to said default timeout configuration on receipt of said transmitted reset signal,

wherein said reminder alarm is continually reset whenever said equipment is within the given range of the home station.